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Artists -

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# Artists of Abraham Lincoln portraits

Albert C. Fauley

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



# Head of state meets foreign body in sketch

By Don Babwin

The food must be pretty good at the American Legion hall in Downers Grove. Even Abe Lincoln, from his spot on the wall a few feet from the bar, looks like he's put on a few pounds.

Lincoln may be a rail of a man in the history books—his 180 pounds were stretched over a 6-foot-4-inch frame—but not in a century-old charcoal drawing that has hung for more than 32 years at the American Legion Burns Alexander Bradley Post No. 80.

In the room renovated and rededicated as the Abraham Lincoln Room last month, the place where they call Bingo every Tuesday, folks have discovered that the man looking down on them may not be Lincoln at all. At least, not all of him.

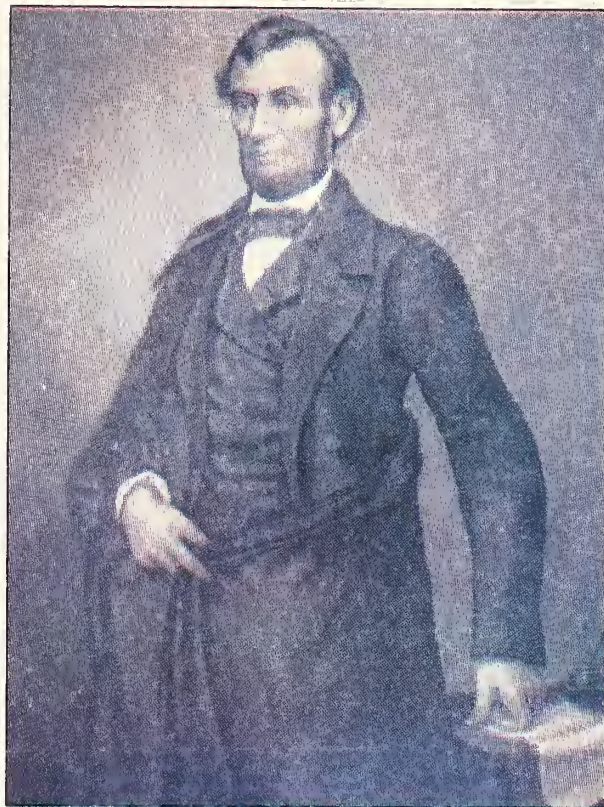
"I remembered thinking the picture looked kind of dumpy," said Richard Bernardini, an architect and senior vice commander at Post 80. "The face looked realistic, but I figured they just put any body on there."

That may be exactly what happened.

A close look suggests that Lincoln's head is resting on someone else's body.

And that somebody else, with his left hand on the Emancipation Proclamation, bears a resemblance, some say, to John C. Calhoun—a staunch proponent

See Lincoln, pg. 6



Tribune photo by James Mayo

Veterans noticed that Abraham Lincoln appeared quite hefty in this charcoal portrait hanging in the American Legion hall in Downers Grove.

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# Lincoln

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of slavery who, if he had ever gotten close to that document, would likely have torn it to pieces.

The combination makes for a portly Lincoln—and, says an expert on Lincoln memorabilia, a portrait worth about \$50,000.

What happened? How did Lincoln's head find its way onto the body of Calhoun in a portrait rendered in charcoal? How did the drawing make it to Downers Grove's American Legion hall? And why is one man's name on the lower right corner of the drawing, and another man's name on the left?

It was the plan to spruce up the room and dedicate it to Lincoln about 1½ years ago that brought these questions to the surface.

If there ever was much talk about the portrait before, nobody at the post can remember it. It was just another piece of history, like the display cases full of old weapons, or the framed yellowed newspapers announcing the end of World War II. Still, if the room was to be renovated, something had to be done about the guest of honor.

"Mr. Lincoln was in pretty bad shape," Don Guest, a member of Post 80, said of the portrait. Worms and spiders had gotten under the protective glass and some of the charcoal had lost its grip and filtered down to the bottom of the drawing, Guest said.

The portrait was taken down to be restored. Bernardini's curiosity was piqued.

Bernardini wrote to the White House and enclosed a color photograph of the portrait to see if he could find anything about it and the name "Brand" on the picture's lower left corner. In March of last year he got a response, but it only cast more mystery.

"The artist, 'Brand,' is not someone that we are familiar with, nor is this name found in any of our reference books," wrote Lydia S. Tederick, a curatorial assistant at the White House.

The letter continued: "It does appear, however, that your likeness of Lincoln may be a composite portrait."

"The body was borrowed from an engraving of John C. Calhoun, and the head was taken from a famous 1864 photograph [of Lincoln] by a Brady photographer, Anthony Berger, and reversed," Tederick wrote.

The Calhoun engraving is reproduced in a book by Stefan Lorant, "Lincoln: A Picture Story of His

Life," and attributed to engraver E.A. Duyckinck.

One theory is that in the rush to produce prints of Lincoln after the 1865 assassination, another, unknown engraver grafted Lincoln's head to Calhoun's body.

Such legerdemain was standard business practice at the time, said Daniel Weinburg, owner of the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop in Chicago.

"If you had a picture [of somebody] that wasn't selling, you would change it to someone who would," said Weinburg, who drove to Downers Grove to see the portrait and concluded that the work was worth perhaps \$50,000.

"It saved the artist a lot of money," said Ruth Cook, the assistant to the director of the Lincoln Museum in Ft. Wayne, Ind. "They didn't have to go to the trouble of drawing the body all over again."

Later, the theory goes, another artist working in charcoal copied the Lincoln-Calhoun engraving, and *voilà*—the American Legion's Lincoln.

"There was a huge industry of Lincoln's images," said Mary Panzer, the curator of photographs at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

That made for some fairly comical exchanges. For example, there is a portrait of Lincoln sitting at a desk. It is his head, but the body belongs to the much shorter Francis Blair. Lincoln's head found its way on the bodies of all sorts of statesmen, from Alexander Hamilton to Martin Van Buren.

Different artists took liberties with the Lincoln image. Even with the Lincoln Memorial, there is a hint of the sculptor's other interests sneaking into his work. "Look at his hands," said Panzer of the Lincoln at the memorial. "One is making the sign for an 'A' and the other is making an 'L.'" As it turns out, the sculptor, Daniel Chester French, was very interested in Gallaudet University, the school for the deaf in Washington, D.C.

There was still the question about the artist of the Post 80 Lincoln. When the frame of the picture was removed, another name besides Brand was revealed in the lower left corner: "Fauley," followed by the notation "82."

Bernardini determined that Fauley was Albert C. Fauley, an Ohio artist who painted official portraits of three governors of that state.

"Maybe Brand is the one who transferred the head of Lincoln onto Calhoun," Bernardini said. "Putting his name on [the portrait] could have been a way of giving him some credit."

FRANCY ALBERT C.

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